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ABSTRACT

Well-designed performance appraisals should provide employees with feedback concerning their performance, serve as a basis for modifying behavior toward more effective work habits, and provide managers with data which they can use to judge future job assignments and compensation. Poorly-designed ones, used as short-term control systems, can create fear and mistrust. Performance appraisals can be very valuable, but they have been largely neglected because of the time and effort needed for data collection. This paper describes changes made in the performance appraisal process at the Mona (Jamaica) Campus of the University of the West Indies. The old review system included assessment by supervisors, review by a committee of peers, and review by the Library Assessing Committee. The new appraisal process, in step with Total Quality management (TQM), begins with the assessee submitting a form on which he has identified both his achievements and areas for improvement. A questionnaire was administered eliciting the responses of professional staff members to both systems, and 15 of 22 were returned. Survey responses indicated that staff were unclear about the library's goals and their own duties. They disliked the perceived subjectivity of the appraisals, the limited scope for registering disagreements, and the emphasis on publications. As for the new process, respondents liked the idea of self-evaluation and liked the form itself but were unhappy about not being asked to participate in its development. The new system may continue to work if used in conjunction with other TQM principles like direct communication, setting the right goals, empowerment and training. Survey data is appended in nine tables. (Contains 13 references.) (BEW)

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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN AN ACADEMIC LIBRARY: A CASE STUDY

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Performance appraisals are a necessary part of an organization's quality control process to ensure that customers get the service they deserve (Kadushin in Pecora and Austin, 1987:57). Well-designed performance appraisals should

- Provide employees with adequate feedback concerning their performance;
- Serve as a basis for modifying or changing behavior toward more effective working habits; and
- Provide managers with data which they can use to judge future job assignments and compensation (Levinson, 1976).

They can provide "... a profile of the organization in terms of its human resources strengths and weaknesses, an inventory of employees' skills and experiences, and an evaluation of the firm's human resources capital" (Fombrun and Laud, 1987:33).

However, both managers and employees are often uneasy about performance appraisal. Some of this unease, according to McGregor (1987:5), is a function of the perception that conventional appraisal processes smack of product inspection and conflict with convictions about "the worth and dignity of the human personality." Poorly designed appraisal systems may be used as a short-term control systems rather than long-term strategic sources of information for planning (Fombrun and Laud, 1987:38), may be ineffective in identifying work habits or behaviors that need to be changed, and will provide data that are invalid for deciding on "promotability" or compensation. Such systems can create fear and mistrust, lowering employees' self-esteem and productivity, and hindering the provision of quality service.

Despite the importance of performance appraisal, it has been neglected in management practice. One reason is that performance appraisal is complex and, in the early stages at least, the process requires time and effort. Managers seeking to institute fair and efficient performance appraisals will find themselves having to continuously consult, communicate, modify, and train. Another reason is that many managers do not collect data on how the performance appraisal systems they use affect their staff. Therefore, they are unaware of the importance of these systems as a management tool.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is an international institution serving 14 different territories. Its three campuses are located at Cave Hill in Barbados, St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago, and Mona, in Jamaica. Enrollment at the University is over 14,000, with about 8500 students registered at the Mona Campus for the 1993/94 academic year.

The UWI Library is the chief information resource center supporting research and teaching. The library at Mona holds some 475,000 volumes and about 8000 current periodical titles. Its collections are divided among three locations: the Main Library, and the Science and Medical branch

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libraries. The UWI Library at each campus is headed by a Campus Librarian. One of these is appointed as University Librarian, the administrative head of all three campus libraries. The professional staff at Mona comprises the Campus Librarian, Deputy Librarian, and 21 other librarians.

Past performance appraisal of professional staff has been almost exclusively associated with the system of staff review for renewal of contract, promotion or indefinite tenure. This review system used at the university has been in operation for a long time with some minor modifications. Recently, however, there have been some changes in the appraisal of certain categories of university staff, including librarians. These changes have to do with how appraisals are carried out at the departmental level and involve the introduction of an appraisal form.

This paper will describe the review system, how performance appraisal was carried out in the past, and the changes made to the appraisal process at the departmental level. It will also present findings from a questionnaire survey on how librarians perceive the performance appraisal process before and since the new performance appraisal instrument has come into use. Based on the findings, the new performance appraisal process will be evaluated using a framework based on Total Quality Management (TQM).

THE REVIEW SYSTEM

Review of librarians is carried out annually for all assistant librarians and, for other categories, when the person is being considered for renewal of contract, promotion to a higher grade[1], crossing a merit bar, or indefinite tenure.

Criteria for assessment

According to the *University of the West Indies Calendar, Vol. I: the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances. 1984 (with amendments to 1991)*, Ordinance 8.18 (iii.c), the criteria to be used for review of librarians are professional competence, professional experience, professional activity, administrative ability, scholarship, contribution to university life, and public service.

These criteria have been expanded to provide guidelines for assessing the performance of professional staff. For example, professional competence includes the elements performance of duties and interpersonal skills. The following statements outline some of what is meant by interpersonal skills:

- Works well with others, both colleagues and users (ready to cooperate);
- Has a positive influence on other members of staff;
- Flexibility/adaptability; and
- Ability to accept and make suggestions/criticisms in a harmonious manner.

The appraisal of a librarian for review purposes was carried out as follows:

1. **Assessment by supervisors.** This included the librarian's immediate supervisor as well as the Campus Librarian at each campus. The immediate supervisor's assessment was based on observation of the librarian over time, and guided by the university's criteria for assessment. In writing the report, the supervisor developed "narrative evaluations of the employee's work behavior or job-related personality traits" (Pecora and Austin, 1987: 63). The report was sent under confidential cover to the Campus Librarian. The Campus Librarian's

report and recommendations were based on his/her observations and incorporated the supervisor's assessment. This document was submitted to the Library Assessing Committee.

2. **Review by a committee of peers.** The Peer Review Committee comprises seven librarians, five of whom are elected by the staff from among their peers. The other two members are the senior librarians who head the Medical and Science branch libraries. The Committee, therefore, excludes the Campus Librarian[2] and the Deputy Librarian qua Deputy.

The Peer Review Committee, under the leadership of its elected Chairman, assessed the curriculum vitae, prepared by the librarian specifically for the review, and discussed the performance of each librarian up for review. The method tended to be a subjective one as defined by Howell and Dipboye (quoted in Pecora and Austin, 1987: 61). Assessment was based more on observation of what people did, rather than by examination of concrete outputs. Some attempt was made to relate the individual performance to that of other librarians using group norms. A report on the staff member was written. This report was signed by each member of the Committee, signifying agreement and then submitted, under confidential cover, to the Campus Librarian. It was passed on to the Library Assessing Committee.

3. **The Library Assessing Committee.** This committee comprises the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs (Chairman), two Deans, the Head of the Department of Library Studies, the University Librarian, and one librarian elected by peers to serve on the committee. (The position on the committee is rotated on a regular basis among the three campuses). The Senior Assistant Registrar serves as Secretary to the Committee. Each Campus Librarian is invited to be present when the cases from his/her library are being considered.

The Library Assessing Committee received and reviewed the following documentation:

- The librarian's curriculum vitae
- The Peer Review Committee's report
- The report of the Campus Librarian
- Referees' reviews of the librarian's publications.[3]

The recommendations of this committee, which may or may not have agreed with those of the Campus Librarian, were sent to the University Assessment and Promotion Committee. Recommendations were made at this level, and further submitted to the Campus Appointments Committee or the University Appointments Committee depending on the rank of the person being assessed. While the University A & P Committee "shall not be bound to give reasons for any decision, but may give such reasons which shall be communicated in writing to the member of staff to whom the decision relates,"[4] usually, the University Librarian was requested to speak to individuals whose reviews were adverse.

THE NEW PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS

While the review system remains substantially the same, the new appraisal process which occurs at the departmental level reflects some important changes. In the new process, all librarians are evaluated annually. The appraisal instrument now being used allows for input by the member of staff in his/her evaluation.

To start the assessment procedure, each

assessee fills in a prescribed form identifying:

- Duties and responsibilities during the year under review;
- Any major achievements for which he/she was wholly or largely responsible;
- Changes/improvements related to systems at work or the university as a whole that the librarian has proposed;
- Significant ad hoc assignments;
- Areas of competence and/or discomfort with work;
- Obstacles to performance; and
- Proposed career path and training necessary.

The supervisor then rates the assessee's performance within the framework of the university's criteria previously outlined, on a scale of 1-5 for each criterion. These scores will provide a profile of the individual's performance over three years, the normal contract period.

The supervisor's evaluation is discussed with the assessee who confirms by signing that this has been seen and discussed. Any librarian who wishes to dispute the evaluation can do so under separate cover. The form is then sent to the Campus Librarian who adds comments.

THE STUDY

A questionnaire eliciting the perceptions librarians hold of the old and new processes was administered to 22 members of the professional staff. Of this number, 15 returned questionnaires.[5] Given the small size of the population, the level of significance was put at 0.10. Since the respondents were not randomly sampled, the views elicited are those of the population responding and are not necessarily those of the professional staff as a whole. However, some findings may indicate trends, as the population constitutes about 68 percent of the librarians on staff.

While the research was largely descriptive, the author felt that there might be differences in the perceptions of the old and new processes based on a respondent's tenure, length of service, status and whether a respondent was a supervisor or not. Therefore, these were included as explanatory variables.

Of 14 persons who provided relevant information, seven had tenure: one had tenure for less than five years, four for five-ten years, and two more than ten years.[6] Length of service of the population varied. Eight persons had served ten years or less, and six over 15 years. Nine were Assistant Librarians/Librarians III and five fell into the group "Librarian II or above." There were five supervisors responsible for assessing subordinate professional members of staff.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE OLD PROCESS

Table 1 shows the level of agreement with selected statements about the old appraisal process.

The high level of agreement among the respondents is interesting. On nine of the 12 statements, 12 or more persons shared the same view with unanimity on one statement that the input of external customers was not taken into consideration. Most respondents found that some features regarded as "basic" to any appraisal process were lacking. Pecora and Austin (1987:71) state, "Both workers and supervisors need to have a common 'vision' and understanding of the central purposes,

goals, functions, and philosophy of the organization. This understanding forms the foundation for both worker commitment and clarity of job tasks to be performed."

As a group, the respondents were unclear about the library's goals, as well as their own duties and responsibilities. Only three persons felt that, under the old process, the library's goals were clearly defined and only two felt their own goals were clearly identified. The findings suggest that job requirements were somewhat fluid or vague. Further, mutually agreed upon performance goals and standards are a necessary criterion of effective performance appraisal (Morrisey in Pecora and Austin, 1987:61-62). Yet, only one person found this criterion satisfied. If goals are not defined clearly, duties not identified precisely nor arrived at by consensus, performance of tasks is not likely to have been the main focus of appraisal.

Schneier, Baird, and Beatty (1987:258) suggest that, in an organization moving towards quality service, all systems, including performance appraisal, must be aligned with the organization's mission. Thus, quality improvement objectives must be integrated into strategic and operating plans and objectives, and incorporated into the performance appraisal system. Six of the 15 respondents agreed that the input of internal customers was taken into consideration. However, according to the respondents, external customers were not taken into consideration. TQM theory insists that not only should the needs of both groups of customer be defined, but also that some assessment of the extent to which these needs are satisfied directly or indirectly by each member of staff is necessary.

Communication about the process was lacking, with only three persons agreeing that feedback was provided voluntarily by supervisors. This lack meant that the primary aim of the former process was not that of providing information to employees regarding their performance, thus assisting them to make modifications toward more effective behavior. Evidently, the process functioned more in regard to promotion, renewal of contracts and so on than in terms of the development of staff. In fact, about half the respondents disagreed (some "strongly") that it contributed to individual or staff career development (Table 2).

On average, review took place once every three years. A majority of the respondents felt that this frequency was adequate. However, had the performance appraisal process been viewed as a performance management tool rather than as a tool for review and promotion decisions, then both assessors and assessees should have felt the need for at least an annual appraisal.

Kirkpatrick (1987:265) suggests that, in assessing appraisal systems, two questions deserve high ratings across the board, whatever the objectives, forms or procedures used. These questions are: Do people know what's expected? and Do they know how well they are doing? In a system unable to answer positively to these two questions, there may be "performance deficiencies, and feelings of insecurity, and other problems."

Table 2, like Table 1, supports the view that the process was viewed negatively generally. The strongest feelings seemed to be associated with

- **The perceived subjectivity of the process.** As far as the respondents were concerned, there was insufficient attention to setting clearly identified and mutually agreed performance objectives and standards (Table 1). In the face of this, respondents perceived that their assessment tended to be subjective.

- **The limited scope for registering disagreements.** At the review level, an assessee can appeal if he/she disagrees with a review decision. The conditions for and process of appeal are identified in the university's ordinances. However, there was no formalized procedure for registering disagreements with assessment at the departmental level.

- **The emphasis on publications.** Publications is a requirement of the university for all staff with academic status. No quantitative standards have been set for publications though librarians are not expected to be as prolific as lecturers. In spite of this, there is some resistance to this requirement, expressed in this perception of "overemphasis" by nine respondents.

At first glance, the generally negative perception of the old process could lead one to conclude that, overwhelmingly, librarians would have found it demotivating or generating insecurity or fear. On the contrary, a majority of respondents did not find it so. However, there were some respondents who found the process demotivating or fearful.

A peer review committee performs an important function, not only in the review system but also in appraisal. According to Edwards and Sproull (1987:157), extensive research shows that "... when many individuals rate an employee's performance, the consensus they reach is more reliable, credible, and defensible (and often less biased) than the supervisor's sole judgment." Also, the assessee should more easily accept the findings. Peer review may also provide an added perspective on how employees perform as members of a team. For peer review to function satisfactorily, however, the weighting given to its recommendations must be fully understood, and its findings communicated to the employee. The former process did include review by a librarian's peers but 11 persons were unsure whether the review was satisfactory.

Respondents were asked to score both the old and new processes on seven constructs normally associated with TQM. The marks were out of ten with ten being the "best" score. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there was any association between mean scores and the predictor variables identified earlier. It was soon apparent that there was a high degree of redundancy among the predictor variables. Consequently, results are presented for tenure and status only.

Table 3 shows mean scores for the former process. The score for each construct was very low, with participation predictably being given the lowest score. These findings confirm those in Tables 1 and 2. The table confirms, too, the unanimity noted above. There was no statistically significant difference in mean ratings between staff who had tenure and those who did not. However, despite the fact that there was no statistically significant difference between any of the pairs of scores, it was interesting that, on six of the seven values, persons with tenure scored the process higher than persons without. Using the Mann-Whitney U test, this result was significant ($p < .10$). A randomly selected person with tenure is likely to score the old process higher than someone without.[7]

Table 4 is largely a repeat of Table 3 because of the redundancy referred to above. Librarians at Level II or above felt somewhat better about the old process than junior librarians, but there was no statistically significant difference between the groups on any construct.

Evidently, persons further along the career path have learned to accommodate a process that even they have viewed critically. Perhaps their greater security have led them to view the system slightly less negatively than those who are not as secure.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW PROCESS

The new form to be completed by staff elicits staff input regarding duties and responsibilities for the year under review. With few exceptions, respondents felt that all questions should be retained on the new form. Table 5 shows that, overall, the new process is viewed in a more positive light than the former process although 11 respondents felt that there should have been more input from staff in the construction of the form. The respondents seemed to be dissatisfied, not with the content of the form, but rather the lack of participation in its design. Staff involvement in the design of an assessment process generally and, more specifically here, in the design of the appraisal form, will probably result in a more "user-friendly, customer-driven" performance appraisal (Schneier, Beatty and Baird, 1987b:13) and a sense of ownership. Perhaps some of the negative perceptions that are still linked to the new process are a result of lack of ownership.

There is insufficient consensus on the likelihood of the new process being objective, and insufficient attention so far to the mutual setting of and agreement on performance objectives. These two factors are interrelated. The more the assessments relate to clearly defined performance objectives, the less likely the appraisal process will be viewed as subjective.

The new process allows for discussion of the evaluation with the supervisor as well as inclusion of assessees' comments and the previous scope for appeal of review decisions still exists. Yet only six persons felt that there was adequate scope for registering disagreement. This may mean merely that, as the process has just been implemented, respondents are being conservative in their expectations. It could also imply that respondents are unclear about the weighting their comments will receive.

Respondents were asked which criteria[8] should be retained for use in the new process. Most respondents felt that all should be retained (with least support for the criterion, "Contribution to University life") (Table 6). However, this should not be seen as an unqualified endorsement since ten of the 15 respondents were "Unsure" whether these same criteria (used in the old process) were appropriate (see Table 2). It may indicate, therefore, a lack of knowledge of alternatives. In addition, some respondents expressed reservations about some criteria with regard to weighting, the amount of time required to fulfill some criteria and whether all criteria were applicable to everybody.

Table 7 shows the mean scores for the new process on selected constructs by tenure of respondent.

The first difference between the scores in this table and those in Table 3 is that the scores in this table are all higher than their counterparts (Table 8). But these changes were predictable from the data in Table 5. Still, it is suggestive that the greatest change occurred in the scores for "Participation by assessee in process." What is being underscored here is the degree to which participation and, by extension, ownership change the way a person feels about an appraisal process.

Table 7 shows, too, that the optimism of respondents with tenure was less guarded than those without. This time, however, there were significant differences in four cases. And despite the small number of responses, differences were significant at

the .05 and .01 levels.

The constructs on which the differences were most significant were participation by assessee in process; clarity about tasks assigned; agreement on performance standards. There are several reasons why this might have happened:

- These constructs relate to aspects of the appraisal process whose implementation depends primarily on supervisors.[9] Because of this, questions about these constructs will be more threatening to supervisors and there is greater pressure on them than on assessees to score these constructs higher;

- Newer members of staff, those without tenure, do not know as much as tenured staff about the process because they have not been as involved in its design. Staff with tenure have enjoyed greater involvement with it at senior level meetings;

- Untenured staff are less secure and, therefore, more conservative in their expectations;

- Although both groups of staff were negative about the old process, those lacking tenure are more likely to have viewed the deficiencies of the old process as contributory to their lack of tenure. This makes them less likely, in turn, to buy into any changes taking place; and

- Those persons administering the system will view small gains more favorably than those lower in the hierarchy.

Table 9 shows the results by status. There were significant differences on the same constructs though the levels of significance were lower.

The new performance appraisal (PA) process is viewed in a more positive light than the one it replaces. Yet, the program has not been "sold" sufficiently to all members of staff and while some of the reservations could have been due to a "wait and see" approach, librarians lower in the hierarchy were more guarded in their optimism. Special attention should be paid to those with the greater reservations, so that the gains are not lost.

COMMENT

In TQM philosophy, developing an organization's human resources is essential to delivering quality service. A committed and empowered team of people will be essential for the delivery of high quality service to external customers. It is therefore important for any organization undergoing self-review to examine its policies and procedures regarding its internal customers as well as its external customers. What do our internal customers most value? What are the barriers that rob people of pride in their work? How can the potential of all employees be released? TQM philosophy suggests that managers need to eliminate fear, encourage self-improvement through training and ongoing education, involve staff in decision making and emphasize communication.

While the University of the West Indies Library has not officially launched a TQM program, there has been increased emphasis on delivering a high quality service especially in view of the recent increases in the cost of tuition borne by students in a straightened economy. There are likely to be many similarities between the UWI (Mona) Library at such a stage and other academic libraries in the initial implementation stage of a TQM program. There will be much

rethinking and reexamination of past policies and changes in procedures. In a milieu of change increased emphasis on the human resources of the organization becomes necessary.

As performance appraisal is one area of management which may have significant impact (positive or negative) on employees, this is a prime area for focusing attention as an organization undergoes change. TQM philosophy suggests some ways in which performance appraisal can be made more responsive to the needs of staff, and more beneficial for the organization.

COMMUNICATION

Kirkpatrick (1987:266) lists the requirements of performance appraisal (PA) processes. All participants must understand the process, and there must be clear and direct communication between all parties involved. Neither the designers of nor the participants in the new PA program in this library seemed to have accorded sufficient importance to the element of communication. Yet it is vital that everyone understand what is being assessed, how and why. There must also be clear and ongoing feedback. Feedback is not only important for clarifying individual weaknesses and strengths, but also ensures that those being assessed understand how the process is in fact operating.

Further, Kirkpatrick insists that all participants must be convinced that the program is worthwhile. The program must be sold. The research showed that even those respondents who scored the new process above average did not award it "Excellent" scores. They, too, have reservations. Resistance to appraisal programs does not come from assessees only but also from supervisors. McGregor (1987:4) attributes supervisors' resistance to normal dislike of criticizing a subordinate, lack of skill, dislike of changes accompanying a new procedure and "mistrust of the validity of the appraisal instrument."

The art of communicating can only develop with constant practice. As assessors and assessees become more comfortable with communicating reservations or fears, as goal setting comes via discussion, and as feedback becomes ongoing rather than an annual exercise, the relationship between supervisor and assessee is more likely to be a mutually supportive and nurturing one.

SETTING THE RIGHT GOALS

It is important that goals be set, but even more important that these goals be the right ones. The right goals are those that take into account the needs of the people the library aims to serve as well as the needs of those serving the clientele. These goals must evolve from a clear understanding of and commitment to the overall mission of the library of providing quality service to customers. The mission statement is what will provide a focus and result in "constancy of purpose" among employees (Mackey and Mackey, 1992:58).

While this library's new PA process has increased the emphasis on mutual goal-setting, Levinson's (1990) critique of the MBO-type approach to goal setting are salutary. He sees it as imperative that employees' personal goals be taken into account, as "the highest point of self-motivation arises when there is complementary conjunction of the subordinate's needs and the organization's requirements" (205). Care must be taken also that the goal-setting process does not become a static and sterile one with little room for creativity and "spontaneity of service and self-assumed responsibility." Some element of team goal setting and appraisal of group and team-members' contribution must be built in. Appraisal of

supervisors by subordinates should also be included since the supervisor has some responsibility for what the worker does and how it is done.

There will be difficulty in clarifying and agreeing on what is to be appraised, especially for professional work in which there are a variety of tasks, unprogrammed work and complex requirements (Schneier, Beatty and Bird (1987:9). Much of the important work of librarians cannot be quantified and, if quantifiable, cannot be easily monitored. From the perspective of the customer, an important requirement from a reference librarian is a user-friendly attitude. But how is this measured in the one-on-one contact between librarian and customer that begins at the circulation desk and ends up in the West Indies and Special Collections by way of the Reserved Book Collection? A preoccupation with numerical data is misplaced (Deming's eleventh point) and some assessments require nothing more "scientific" than sound judgment using qualitative data.

EMPOWERMENT

People begin to be empowered when fear is driven out. Performance appraisal that is perceived as exclusively linked to decisions about promotion, and that emphasizes the "defects" of the employee without taking into account defects of systems, are likely to create fear and insecurity.

But the academic librarian is also empowered by a sense of autonomy. Autonomy may be fostered by encouraging involvement. Participation in the design and application of the PA program, for example, will increase the likelihood that all members of staff, including the newer recruits feel a sense of ownership. It is by encouraging this sense of ownership that some of the fears regarding performance appraisal will be allayed.

Some element of self-assessment is also desirable for professionals and can be formally incorporated in the new assessment process (McGregor, 1987). The onus would be on librarians to draw up a document to define broad areas of responsibility. They would then use this to establish their own short-term performance goals and strategies. The supervisor would assist in modifying this document by relating individual performance objectives to those of the library. At the end of a specified period, the librarian would carry out self-appraisal based on the targets set previously. The supervisor and librarian together would discuss this self-appraisal and set new targets.

Self-appraisal should mean a shift for the employee from passive to active, and for the PA process from past, limited knowledge and appraisal of personality to future, self-knowledge/insight and analysis of performance. McGregor reminds that the supervisor has veto power at each step of the process. However, this rarely needs to be exercised, as most subordinates tend to be realistic about potentialities and achievements, especially if their evaluation is completed before that of the supervisor. As under TQM, the supervisor's role becomes that of consultant and coach (Grant, Shani and Krishnan 1994:28).

TRAINING

Deming emphasized the importance of training, education, and self-improvement in a quality-focused organization. Training and retraining staff can lead to increased pride in work, prevent burnout, prepare staff for advancement, and reward initiative (Mackey and Mackey, 1992:59,61). Further, training provides an opportunity to "teach an employee how to do a job within the culture of the organization."

In the old process, lack of clarity in

performance goals may have contributed to what many respondents perceived as inadequate training for all duties. The new instrument allows employees to identify formally areas of their work with which they are uncomfortable, and factors preventing performance of duties. Coming out of this, areas for training will be identified so performance can be improved.

Those carrying out the review must also be trained. Appraising performance does not come naturally. Assessors need to have some basic training in what and how to observe, how to document observations, pitfalls to avoid and how to coach employees. If employees feel assured that those assessing them are aware of these elements, they may not fear evaluation. Supervisors also are more likely to feel confident.

CONCLUSION

Based on the responses, the superiority of the new assessment process lies in the increased participation, clarity, objectivity, transparency, and communication over the former process. However, this superiority is relative. The scores on the new process indicate that more needs to be done, particularly in the areas of goal setting, agreement on performance standards, communication, and participation generally. As implied above, one challenge is to retain and increase the support of the more senior members of staff while, simultaneously, providing opportunities for lower level staff to "buy in" more fully to the process. If this challenge is met, the new process will contribute to the empowerment of all professional staff.

NOTES

[1] In ascending order are Assistant Librarian, Librarian III, Librarian II. The grades Librarian III and II contain salary 'merit bars.' There are specific criteria for crossing the merit bars. Deputy Librarian, Campus Librarian, and University Librarian are appointees.

[2] Up to 2 years ago, the Campus Librarian chaired the Peer Review Committee.

[3] The publications are refereed by subject specialists outside the Library, and if possible, at one of the other campuses.

[4] *University of the West Indies Calendar, Vol. I: the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances. 1984 (with amendments to 1991).* Ordinance 8.22.

[5] The author excluded herself from the survey.

[6] 'Tenure' refers to indefinite tenure.

[7] This pattern is repeated in the other tables.

[8] The criteria used in the questionnaire were taken from 'Excerpt from Minutes of Meeting of Library Assessing Committee held on Friday, July 10, 1992.' The criteria identified in that document were 'Professional competence,' 'Performance of duties,' 'Interpersonal skills,' 'Administrative/Supervisory ability,' 'Scholarship,' 'Professional activity,' and 'Contribution to University life.'

[9] As already noted, tenure is a close surrogate for supervisory status, as most supervisors on staff have tenure.

Table 1. Level of agreement with statements about the old process

STATEMENT	NUMBER AGREEING
Frequency of assessment was adequate	9
The main focus of the appraisal was performance of tasks	1
My duties and responsibilities were always clearly identified	2
Training for all duties was adequate	3
The Library's goals were always clearly defined	3
The main focus of the appraisal was personal attributes	3
The input of external customers was taken into consideration	0
The input of internal customers was taken into consideration	6
Feedback was provided voluntarily by the supervisor	3
The feedback process identified a librarian's weaknesses	5
Duties/responsibilities to be assessed were agreed between supervisor and assessee	1
The feedback process identified a librarian's strengths	2

Table 2. Numbers of persons disagreeing with, unsure of, or agreeing with selected statements about the old process

STATEMENT	DISAGREE	UNSURE	AGREE
The assessment process contributed to career	7	4	4
Overall the assessment process was demotivating	8	3	4
The criteria for assessment were appropriate	1	10	4
The assessments tended to be subjective	0	5	9
There was adequate scope for registering disagreement with assessments	9	2	4
The assessment process contributed to my own career development	8	4	3
The process generated insecurity or fear	6	3	6
The assessment process was sufficiently transparent and open	6	5	4
The peer review process was satisfactory	1	11	3
Too much emphasis was placed on publications	2	4	9

Table 3. Mean scores on selected constructs [old process], respondents with tenure and those without

CONSTRUCT	OVERALL MEAN	HAVE TENURE?		MISSING CASES
		YES	NO	
Objectivity of process	3.80	3.83	3.75	5
Participation by assessee in process	1.58	2.14	0.80	3
Clarity about tasks assigned	3.50	3.83	3.00	5
Specificity of output expected	2.56	2.40	2.75	6
Agreement on performance standards	2.40	3.17	1.25	5
Transparency of process	2.30	3.17	1.00	5
Process supportive of career development	2.36	3.14	1.00	4

Table 4. Mean scores on selected constructs [old process] by status of respondent

CONSTRUCT	OVERALL MEAN	STATUS		MISSING CASES
		LIB III	LIB II	
Objectivity of process	3.80	3.80	3.80	5
Participation by assessee in process	1.58	1.29	2.00	3
Clarity about tasks assigned	3.50	3.00	4.00	5
Specificity of output expected	2.56	2.60	2.50	6
Agreement on performance standards	2.40	1.67	3.50	5
Transparency of process	2.30	1.20	3.40	5
Process supportive of career development	2.36	1.00	4.00	4

Table 5. Responses to new process/form

STATEMENT	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
The provision for inclusion of staff member's comments is adequate	8	5	2
There is adequate scope for registering disagreement with evaluation	6	6	3
Some questions are threatening	7	6	2
The new process is likely to be subjective	9	4	2
Performance objectives for the year have been discussed and agreed on	4	8	3
Feedback is likely to be satisfactory	7	4	4
The construction of this form could have had more input from library staff	11	2	2

Table 6. Number of persons agreeing that criteria should be retained

CRITERION	NUMBER. OF PERSONS
Professional competence	13
Performance of duties	13
Interpersonal skills	13
Administrative/Supervisory ability	13
Scholarship	12
Professional activity	12
Contribution to University life	9

Table 7. Mean scores on selected constructs [new process] by tenure

CONSTRUCT	OVERALL MEAN	TENURE?		MISSING CASES
		YES	NO	
Objectivity of process	6.20	7.17	4.75	5
Participation by assessee in process	6.00	7.29	3.75***	4
Clarity about tasks assigned	5.56	6.83	3.00**	6
Specificity of output expected	4.63	5.60	3.00	7
Agreement on performance standards	5.38	7.00	2.67**	7
Transparency of process	5.63	6.50	3.00*	7
Process supportive of career development	4.50	5.00	3.33	5

***: $p < .01$ **: $p < .05$ *: $p < .10$

Table 8. Overall mean scores for constructs by tenure - old and new processes

CONSTRUCT	OVERALL MEAN SCORE	
	FORMER PROCESS	NEW PROCESS
Objectivity of process	3.80	6.20
Participation by assessee in process	1.58	6.00
Clarity about tasks assigned	3.50	5.56
Specificity of output expected	2.56	4.63
Agreement on performance standards	2.40	5.38
Transparency of process	2.30	5.63
Process supportive of career development	2.36	4.50

Table 9. Mean scores on selected constructs [new process] by status

CONSTRUCT	OVERALL MEAN	STATUS		MISSING CASES
		LIB III	LIB II	
Objectivity of process	6.20	5.00	7.40	5
Participation by assessee in process	6.00	4.50	7.80**	4
Clarity about tasks assigned	5.56	3.75	7.00*	6
Specificity of output expected	4.63	3.00	6.25	7
Agreement on performance standards	5.38	3.50	7.25*	7
Transparency of process	5.63	3.67	6.80*	7
Process supportive of career development	4.50	3.40	5.60	5

** : $p < .01$ * : $p < .05$ * : $p < .10$

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